AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRATEGY FOR THE HISTORIC CENTRE OF ST ALBANS

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Executive summary

St Albans' historic environment can play an important role in achieving the Council's overall vision of making the City and District an outstanding place in which to live and work. However, the complexities and extent of archaeological and early historic remains in the historic core of the city, together with the continual pressure on them posed by redevelopment are such as to require a detailed strategy specifically tailored to the needs of the city centre.

This strategy defines what is meant by the Historic Environment and reviews its character and its value for today's residents and for future generations. Detailed maps are included, showing the likelihood of archaeological deposits surviving in different parts of the town, and their probable significance in terms of their educational, cultural, amenity and academic potential. As a result 33 key sites(of which 20 lie within the historic core of St Albans) have been identified as being of particular significance and an assessment made as to their long-term sustainability.

Alongside the key areas, there are large areas within the Medieval, Roman and prehistoric core settlements where the archaeological potential is still uncertain. Specific measures for managing these through the Development Control process are set out. These are designed to implement the Council's archaeological policies more effectively while at the same time ensuring a flexible and pragmatic approach to what can be varied and complex remains whose extent and importance may not always be clear initially.

The role of the District Archaeology Service is summarised, and its strengths and weaknesses discussed in chapter 8. Two areas of work are identified as being of crucial importance. Firstly there is the need to maintain accurate and up-to-date records of the condition, extent and value of different elements within the historic environment so that informed decisions on its management can be made. Secondly there is a need to disseminate information about the historic environment much more widely. This will increase the appreciation of it among the Council's customers and stakeholders, as well as attracting more visitors and tourists to the city.

A detailed plan of action and timetable to address these issues by 2007 is set out in section 9.

1.0   INTRODUCTION

1.1   St Albans has an exceptionally long and varied history *(Fig.1)*. This, together with the survival of a wide range of archaeological remains, historic buildings and the influence of early townscapes on the modern town layout makes a vital contribution to the individuality and character of the town. It is a source of pride and enjoyment to many residents of the district, and makes the city an attractive place in which to live and work. It is an important educational resource and a major factor in drawing visitors to the city.

1.2.   By the end of the 1st century BC St Albans was already a particularly important regional centre. In the Roman period this importance was enhanced and the town became one of the largest Roman cities in the country. The outstanding importance of St Albans, however, is due to its association with the earliest British Christian martyr, St Alban and the establishment of a Christian centre here in the 3rd century. This in turn led to a continuity of occupation here throughout the post Roman and early medieval periods and the emergence of the Abbey as one of the foremost centres of pilgrimage and learning in medieval England. Consequently St Albans is in many respects unique and its archaeology is of national, and even international importance.

1.3.   The physical remains of this long history, however, are often fragile and ephemeral. Once altered or removed, whether in the course of development, agricultural processes, natural erosion or archaeological excavation, they cannot be replaced. In St Albans, however, the high land prices and the needs of a vibrant community result in constant development pressure. Consequently the proper management, interpretation and conservation of the City's heritage places a heavy responsibility on the Council and its partners.

1.4.   St Albans therefore needs a robust, effective and wide ranging strategy, for managing the remains of its historic past for the benefit of today's community and for future generations. It is important that the strategy is one to which all stakeholders are fully committed. Due to the exceptionally complex nature of the archaeological evidence resulting from the continued occupation of the historic core of St Albans over two millennia, specific archaeological strategies are required for its management. In the context of this strategy the `historic core' is taken to consist of the area of the Pre-Roman settlement, the Roman town and its suburbs, the monastic Abbey precinct and the Medieval and post Medieval town. The extent of the area so defined is shown on Fig 1.

1.5   Although the area covered by this strategy is restricted to the historic core, it is acknowledged that the remainder of the District contains important archaeological deposits forming a highly significant element in the District's historic environment. The important point is that as in any historic town centre, the very complex issues raised by deeply stratified deposits in urban environments (in our case especially by the complexities of the Monastic and Roman town remains) require specific approaches for their proper conservation, excavation and management. These are generally very different to those needed on rural or village sites which are generally less deeply stratified, but which may involve other issues such as the character of the historic landscape etc.

1.6   This is not to say that strategies are not needed for other areas, hence District Archaeology's heavy involvement with historic environment projects and partnerships. These include contributions to the Historic Landscape Characterisation work undertaken by Herts County Council, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [DEFRA] funded stewardship plan for Gorhambury, the English Heritage funded North Thames Tributary Project in which the gravel areas east of St Albans form the pilot study. and the English Heritage funded Extensive Urban Surveys (those for Wheathampstead, Redbourn and Harpenden are already complete and available on the Internet http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/projArch/EUS/herts_eus2005/
Together with the Herts Sites and Monuments Record [SMR] these surveys/assessments/data sets are being used as the basis for the new and revised Archaeological Policies Areas which are currently being worked on with the local plans team for inclusion in the Local Development Documents.

1.7   While the historic environment encompasses a number of elements including standing buildings, street-scapes and historic landscapes. The management and conservation of buried archaeological remains, however, pose particular problems. This is especially the case in a City such as St Albans where the range, wealth, importance and complexity of buried remains, together with the depth at which they may lie, raises complex issues requiring specific skills and expertise. The scope of this strategy has therefore been confined to a management plan for the buried archaeological remains from the historic core of the City.

1.8   The Council will have to fulfil the requirements of changing Government guidance and legislation. As part of the Governments Heritage Protection Review [HPR] the Government has identified the following key reforms needed to improve the way in which the Historic Environment is protected and managed.

• Produce a unified register combining scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, register of historic park, gardens and battlefields
• Operate a unified consent system covering buildings and archaeology that will work within the planning system
• Make it a statutory requirement for local authorities to establish and maintain, or have access to Historic Environment Records [HERs].

1.9   In order to frame an effective strategy the Council needs to ask four questions.

• How can we fulfil current and future government requirements while also meeting the expectations of our customers, stakeholders and partners?
• How can we provide accurate, usable, accessible and up-to-date information on the historic environment?
• How can we empower local people to participate in heritage issues, and so foster and enjoy the city's historic environment?
• How can we enable the continued adaptation, renewal and development essential for a thriving local economy while at the same time ensuring the sustainability of the historic and archaeological resource for future generations to enjoy?

A view of St Albans and Roman Verulamium

2.0 STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 The overall vision of St Albans City and District Council is to `*preserve and enhance the distinctive character of St Albans City and District, making it an outstanding place in which to live and work and to visit, while everyone enjoys a range of quality and efficient services in a progressive, caring and environmentally concerned community'.*

2.2. In order to realise this vision the Council has identified five strategic aims.

- *Aim 1 - To build a community that is open, fair and inclusive*
- *Aim 2 - To work in partnership for the health and well-being of the community*
- *Aim 3 - To cherish and promote our heritage, arts and culture*
- *Aim 4 - To safeguard our environment*
- *Aim 5 - To ensure the District is a desirable place in which to live and work.*

2.3 The District Archaeology service has an important role to play within the framework of these corporate aims. The following eight objectives have been identified as specific means towards achieving all five aims.

1. To provide a high quality service and strive for excellence through continued improvement. (Aim 3)

2. To work in partnership with voluntary, statutory, commercial and community organisations to meet the needs of the whole community. (Aims 1 and 2)

3. To preserve the heritage of the District and share it widely. (Aim 3)

4. To promote and implement environmental good practice. (Aim 4)

5. To conserve and improve the character and attractiveness of the environment throughout the District. (Aims 4 and 5)

6. To promote quality and affordable leisure and arts opportunities for all. (Aims 1, 3 and 5)

7. To promote St Albans City and District as a tourist destination and as a place for local residents to enjoy. (Aims 3, 4 and 5)

8. To support learning opportunities for local people. (Aim 3)

3 0   THE EXISTING POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

3.1   *Government Policy* This is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Notes [PPG] 15 and 16. PPG16 explicitly states that '*the desirability of preserving ancient monuments (whether scheduled or not) together with their setting is a material consideration in determining planning applications'.*[1] PPG 15 extends this principle to include the built historic environment. In the same vein, the Environmental Directive includes cultural heritage as one of the elements to be taken into account in assessing the impact of large-scale developments on the environment. All these confirm the intrinsic value of the historic environment.

3.2   Also relevant is the European Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/ec) which requires a formal environmental assessment (including an assessment of the historic environment) of certain plans and programmes, including land-use and planning.

3.3   In December 2000 English Heritage published '*Power of Place: the future of the Historic Environment*[2] which included 18 headline recommendations for managing the historic environment in England, and emphasised the strong need for immediate actions. The recommendations for actions by local authorities which are particularly relevant to the management of the historic environment in the St Albans District are:

    Recommendation 1:   Local authorities take full account of the historic environment in preparing community strategies required by the Local Government Act, 2000.

    Recommendation 5:   Local authorities develop a joint strategy with the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment [CABE] to ensure that new development enhances the historic environment.

    Recommendation 8:   The historic environment is placed at the heart of education.

    Recommendation 9:   Regional and local cultural strategies identify and address previously neglected influences on the historic environment.

    Recommendation 13:   Local authorities ensure that proper specialist advice on the historic environment is available.

    Recommendation 16:   Public access to information on the historic environment is facilitated.

3.4   Regional Policy Central Government advises a speedy move from the existing system of regional planning guidance based on structure, local, waste and minerals plans to one based on Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents[3]. County Structure Plans will be replaced with Regional Spatial Strategies. These will be prepared by the regional planning authority and will set out policies relating to development and land-use.

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[1] PPG 15 `*Planning and the Historic Environment*, DOE 1995; PPG16 *Archaeology and Planning* DOE 1992
[2] *Power of Place* English Heritage 2000. See also *Force for our Future* published by DCMS 2001
[3] PPG12, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister October 2004

3.5 Local Development Documents will be drawn up by District authorities to provide a Local Development Framework for delivering the regional spatial strategy. The Framework will include the following Development Plan Documents, which will replace the District Local Plan Review (1994):

- Core Strategy
- Site allocations and proposals
- Development control policies

The Devopment Plan Documents will contain the Council's planning policies on archaeology

3.6 St Albans City and District Council Policy

Through its Corporate Strategic Aims (*paras. 2.1 - 2.2 above)* the Council is committed to conserving and enhancing its archaeological resources, to promoting interest in, and enjoyment of, the District's history and to improving the quality of life for people who live or work in the area. The Council's Cultural strategy recognises the importance of the heritage and through its Economic and Tourism strategies the Council aims to develop tourism , an area in which the historic environment clearly has an important role.

3.6.1 Planning policies have been drawn up to protect the historic environment as a whole and to ensure that it is sustainable, especially where important archaeological sites are affected by development. Development control is at the front-line of conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Policies are not designed to prevent change, but seek to ensure that change is managed in the interests of today's residents and those of future generations. The existing policies in relation to the archaeology of the District as a whole (including the historic core of St Albans) are set out in the 1994 St Albans District Local Plan Review (pages 163-168). They are based on the grading of areas of archaeological significance according to their importance.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Sites of national importance, such as Verulamium, are 'scheduled' by the Secretary of State at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (hereafter the DCMS), and have statutory protection under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments Acts of 1913-1989. It is an offence to carry out any works which could destroy or damage a scheduled ancient monument unless 'Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent' has been obtained from the Secretary of State.

There are currently 18 Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the District. Thirteen of these are in the Historic Core area and are listed in Appendix 1 and shown on Fig 2. They are subject to Policy 109 in the 1994 St Albans District Local Plan Review.

> *POLICY 109 Planning applications for development which would adversely affect a Scheduled Ancient Monument will be refused on archaeological grounds unless prior scheduled monument consent has been obtained from the Secretary of State. If scheduled monument consent has been granted, the District Council will seek to preserve the amenity of ancient monuments by resisting proposals within scheduled areas which would detract from their character.*

i) *Sites for Local Preservation*

These are sites other than Scheduled Ancient Monuments, which although not considered to be of national significance, are particularly important in regional or local terms. There is a presumption against any development which might damage them. There are currently 5 sites for Local Preservation in the historic centre of the city (listed in Appendix 2 and shown on Fig 2). They are subject to Policy 110 in the 1994 St Albans District Local Plan Review.

> *POLICY 110 Planning Permission will not be granted for development which would adversely affect the remains within, or the character of, the sites for local preservation. Development may be permitted in exceptional circumstances, following evaluation, if the Council is satisfied that important remains would not be destroyed or the character of the site adversely affected. The evaluation, which may involve limited excavation or other work (e.g. geophysical survey) is to be carried out by the Council or an archaeologist approved by the Council. Planning permissions will normally be subject to conditions requiring facilities for the Council to record remains by excavation in advance of construction and/or during construction.*
>
> *Voluntary agreements will be sought (e.g. under Section 106) to cover the cost of work, including any initial evaluation, and to ensure that finds made during the course of such work are donated to the Council. Voluntary agreements will also be sought to ensure the continued preservation and management of important remains.*

ii) *Sites where Planning Permission may be subject to a recording condition.*

There are large areas in the historic centre of St Albans where preservation is not necessary, but recording prior to any proposed development may be essential. These may be subject to a recording condition (Appendix 3 and Fig 2) and are covered by Policy 111 in the 1994 St Albans District Local Plan Review.

POLICY 111 The Council will not normally refuse planning applications on archaeological grounds. However, following evaluation, planning permission may be subjected to a condition requiring facilities for the Council to record remains by excavation in advance of construction, and/or during construction. The evaluation, which may involve limited excavation or other work (e.g. geophysical survey) is to be carried out by the Council or an archaeologist approved by the Council.

Voluntary agreements will be sought (e.g. under Section 106) to cover the cost of work, including any initial evaluation, and to ensure that finds made during the course of such work are donated to the Council.

4 THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

4.1 In 2002 English Heritage published *The Review of Policies Relating to the Historic Environment in England.* This defined the historic environment as '*all the physical evidence for past human activity and its associations that people can see, understand and feel in the present world'.* As one of the oldest of the historic towns in England St Albans has an unusually rich and varied historic environment. There are reminders of this long history all over the area, but what makes St Albans unique is not just the great antiquity of many of the archaeological and historic remains, but also their extent, their preservation, continuity through many centuries and in many cases their visibility.

4.2 All this is very largely due to the way in which the town developed (*Fig 1,* and air photograph on page 5). Late in the 1st century BC a settlement grew up on the higher ground south-west of the River Ver. With the arrival of the Romans in about AD50, the town of Verulamium was established in the valley, around what today is St Michael's village.

4.3 Two centuries later Verulamium had expanded across 80 hectares to become the third largest town in Britain. After the collapse of Roman rule in the early 5th century, the focus of settlement gradually moved to the site of the shrine on the grave of the 3rd-century martyr, Alban, on the higher ground on the other side of the river. Later on, a Saxon monastery was established here; according to later Medieval traditions, founded by the Mercian king, Offa, in 747. In the late 10th century the abbey acquired most of the site of the Roman town and the main road from London (Watling Street) was diverted away from Verulamium to run past the monastery, and the large fishpond on the north-east flank of the Roman town was drained. The fishpond had provided a major source of livelihood to the townspeople and its disappearance quickly led to the relocation of the remaining inhabitants of the former Roman town to the area around the Abbey.

4.4 After the Norman Conquest a new monastery was laid out. The rebuilt Abbey church was completed in 1114. The absence of local building stone meant that the church and many of the monastic buildings were built almost entirely of re-used material from the now demolished Roman town. The medieval town steadily expanded around it, and by the end of the 12th century the plan of central St Albans was well established. The dissolution of the Abbey in 1539 did not affect the plan or size of the contemporary town significantly, although the

monastic buildings, with the exception of the Abbey Gate and Abbey church, were demolished almost immediately. It was only with the coming of the railway to St Albans in 1864 that Victorian suburbs developed and the town expanded beyond the medieval borough boundary. The 20th century saw a further dramatic increase in the size of the town although the site of the Roman and prehistoric towns, that had remained farmland since the 17th century, is still largely undeveloped. (*Fig.3*)

4.5   In St Albans the physical evidence for the historic environment falls into five broad categories:

- Buried remains.

- Extant monuments and historic buildings.

- Historic influences (including historic buildings) evident in the existing townscape.

- Objects preserved in museums and private collections,

Above – Late medieval buildings at the south end of the market place and in French Row

- Documentary sources - charters, inventories, wills, maps, drawings and the observations of early antiquarians. <u>The St Albans Museum Service also houses a useful collection of drawings and prints showing the growth of the town</u>

4.6   This Strategy covers the first three categories, i.e. Buried Remains, Extant monuments and historic elements in the modern townscape. The management of museum material is dealt with in the Museum Development Strategy, and the documentary archives are housed by the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Centre in Hertford.

5.1   ELEMENTS FORMING ST ALBANS' HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT.

5.1.1   BURIED REMAINS These are made up of the remains of structures interleaved with layers of soil, building debris and accumulated rubbish. By recording these deposits layer by layer and analysing the associated objects, the history of the site can be recovered. Pollen, seeds and organic remains can survive for centuries, especially in damp or waterlogged deposits, and can provide valuable information on the economy and natural environment at different stages in the past.

5.1.2   The survival of archaeological remains is greatly influenced by the local topography. In St Albans the prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval settlements were sited on the higher ground while the Roman town was concentrated in the valley of the river Ver. Erosion and agriculture have destroyed many of the remains from the prehistoric period, and broadly speaking archaeological remains survive best over the lower lying areas of the Roman town and in the flood plain of the Ver where they have been protected by the build up of later deposits and by hill wash from higher up the valley side. The position of much of the

prehistoric settlement and the Medieval town and monastery on higher ground has often resulted in substantial erosion and/or terracing. As a result some deposits have been almost totally removed, whereas other have been protected by overlying terracing.   (*Fig.4*)

5.1.3 ***Early Origins*** By the early 1st century AD St Albans had become an important regional centre demarcated on the north and west by massive earthworks. The precise character of the settlement at this date is still not clear, but it is of crucial importance for understanding the transition from the prehistoric to the Roman period. The Roman town of Verulamium is still one of the relatively few Romano-British towns that grew up directly on the site of an existing centre. Deposits sealed beneath the Roman Forum, which itself underlies the church and churchyard of St Michaels, are likely to be particularly well preserved and informative.

Early Origins - Key Sites (Figs 5-6)

1	*Pre Roman deposits beneath St Michael's village.*
2	*Alluvium deposits with organic remains in St Michael's village*
3	*Alluvium deposits in Verulamium Park*
4	*Alluvium Deposits in Verulam Hill Field*
5	*Beech Bottom Dyke*
6	*Pre-Roman settlement ditch in King Harry Lane playing field*
7	*Pre-Roman settlement and ditches in Prae Wood, Prae Farm area*
8	*Pre-Roman settlement and ditches in Gorhambury area*
9	*Devils Dyke, Maynes Farm*
10	*Ditched enclosure in Abbey Orchard*

5.1.4 In the course of the first four centuries AD Verulamium grew to be the third largest town in Roman Britain. It is also one of the few remaining Roman towns in this country

Above - un-excavated Roman streets and buildings visible in ripening crops in the north part of the Roman town

that occupy an open site, where remains have not been overlain or destroyed by later buildings. This alone makes the town exceptionally important as an archaeological resource. Aerial photographs have revealed numerous Roman buildings and archaeological excavation has uncovered roughly 10% of the area enclosed by the town walls. It is clear that Verulamium included the full range of public buildings normal within any major town within the Roman empire- temples, baths, well-appointed private houses, public buildings, shops and workshops. The high quality of many of the Roman remains is reflected in the exceptional collection of mosaic floors, wall paintings and objects in the Verulamium Museum. In spite of the extensive stone robbing that the town was subjected to in the Middle Ages, many of the Roman buildings survive well

and there are known to be significant archaeological deposits over much of the Roman town.

5.1.5. Compared to the Roman and medieval periods, comparatively little is known about the town between the collapse of Roman rule in Britain in the early 5th century and the Norman Conquest. One of the most important features of Verulamium, however, is its association with St Alban, the earliest British Christian martyr who was probably martyred near the site of the medieval Abbey (now the Cathedral and Abbey church of St Alban) some time in the 3rd century AD. This area is therefore crucial for the understanding of the growth of Christianity in Britain in the late Roman period, and its subsequent survival into the early Middle Ages.

5.1.6 Research over the last twenty years has demonstrated that early post Roman and Saxon remains survive in three areas. Documentary sources suggest that up until the 10th century the townspeople inhabited Kingsbury, or Kings burgh, the name given to St Michael's village up until the 15th century. It was only in the 19th century that the area between Branch Road and Ver Road became identified as Kingsbury, and there is no convincing archaeological evidence to support this. It now appears that in 5th-8th centuries settlement was concentrated in what today is St Michael's village, with some houses strung out along the major roads out of the town.

Roman and Post Roman Key sites (Figs 5-6)

11	*Site of Roman Verulamium*
12	*Temple Enclosure – Oysterfields*
13	*Suburbs and cemetery in Branch Road / Mount Pleasant and Redbourn Road*
14	*Suburbs and cemetery in Verulam Hill Field*
15	*Area around Kingsbury Manor*
16	*Pre Norman occupation in the grounds of Abbey Primary School*
17	*Traces of late Roman structures in Hill Street*

MEDIEVAL REMAINS

5.1.7 *The Monastery* At the time of the Norman Conquest the Saxon monastery had recently been re-founded. A major rebuilding project had been planned and large quantities of building material dug from the ruins of Verulamium had been stockpiled. It was not until 1077 however, that the first Norman abbot, Paul of Caen, started on the new buildings, and the Abbey was completed in 1114. The monastic buildings conformed to the normal Benedictine plan and extended to the south of the Abbey Church. In the 12th and 13th centuries it was a major centre of art and learning. Its position was

Abbey tower- built almost entirely of re-used Roman material.

further enhanced when the locally born Nicholas Breakspear became Pope (Adrian IV 1154-9) and conferred on St Albans the status of premier English Abbey.

5.1.8   The demolition of many of the monastic buildings surrounding the Abbey following the Dissolution of the monastery in 1539 resulted in a thick layer of rubble and building debris. This buried the medieval floor levels, and in some cases the bases of walls, and preserved still earlier deposits intact. It is these earlier deposits that are likely to be particularly valuable in unraveling the history of the development of the site from Late Roman shrine to Norman Abbey. The history is a particularly important matter, both locally and nationally, but there is currently a dearth of evidence and interpretation.

Medieval Monastery -Key Sites (Figs 5,7)

18.   THE ABBEY CHURCH OF ST ALBAN
19.   AREA SOUTH OF THE ABBEY NAVE, SITE OF CLOISTERS, CLOISTER GARDEN, KITCHEN, DORMITORY, GUESTHOUSE AND ABBOT'S LODGING
20.   SITE OF SACRISTRY AND ST ANDREW'S CHAPEL IN THE NORTH CHURCHYARD
21.   SITE OF INFIRMARY AND PRIOR'S HOUSE UNDER ORCHARD HOUSE AND DEANERY
22.   STRETCH OF PRECINCT BOUNDARY IN GROUNDS OF VERULAM HOUSE
23.   ABBEY GATEHOUSE AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS
24.   WAXHOUSE GATE

5.1.9   *Other Religious Buildings, Priories, Chapels and Hospitals*
Little survives of the town's other medieval religious buildings. Sopwell Nunnery in Cottonmill Lane dated from the mid-12th century and excavations in the 1960s uncovered remains of a small rectangular building with an eastern apse. After 1539 the site was acquired by Edward Lee who built a house on the site as the medieval building. The existing ruins (*above*), however, are those of the 17th century mansion that replaced Lee's original house.

5.1.10 Virtually nothing is known of the chapels of St Germanus and St Mary Magdalen, both in Verulamium Park and both reputedly late Saxon in origin. Medieval St Albans also included two 12th-century leper hospitals. St Julian's, for men, fronted onto Watling Street, a short distance to the east of St Stephen's church, but nothing is known of its plan. Slightly more is known of the St Mary de Pre nunnery for women, which lay in 'churchyard meadow' west of the Roman town. Traces of walls are visible on air photographs, and masonry fragments have been observed in sewers and land drains. What was probably the church survived as a barn until the mid 19th century, and it is likely that in spite of being cut by land drains substantial remains still survive below the ground.

5.1.11 By the time Benjamin Hare's plan of 17th-century St Albans was published in 1634, (*Fig 8*) the parish church of St Andrew, immediately north of the west end of the Abbey, together with the enormous ranges of monastic buildings to the south had been almost completely demolished. Only the Prior's house (used as the rectory until it was replaced by the modern Deanery in the late 19th century) the Water Gate, (close to the existing Abbeygate House) the stables (on the western flank of the former Great Court) and the Great Gateway survived more or less intact. Today all that remains is the 15th century Gateway (*left).*

5.2 EXTANT REMAINS

5.2.1 Archaeology is not only concerned with recording buried monuments. Together with the Devil's Dyke at Wheathampstead, the Beech Bottom Dyke is among the most impressive late Iron Age earthworks in the country (Key Site 5, Fig.5). Constructed in the 1st century AD and running for over a kilometre from St Albans Road Sandridge to Batchwood Drive, it is still over 15metres deep. *(See illustration p. 20)* The remnants of the Roman theatre in the Gorhambury estate remain the country's only visible Roman theatre, while in Verulamium Park the well-preserved mosaic floor of town house built in the late 2nd century is on public display.

5.3. *Historic Elements surviving in the modern Townscape*

5.3.1 The medieval street plan in the modern town centre is itself an eloquent record of St Albans' history. The 10th century Abbot Ulsinus is credited with diverting Watling Street from its original course through the Roman town to run up Holywell Hill, past the Abbey, down Church Street (the modern George Street and High Street) and Fishpool Street, reverting to its original line close to St Michael's Church. This road was the main route to the north-west until the construction of the Verulam Road in 1820. In the Middle Ages the main road to London lay on the north-east of the river and today is represented by Sopwell Lane; originally it continued along the line of Riverside Road,. The western end of Fishpool Street already existed in the Roman period and it is possible that in Ulsinus' time its eastern arm ran south of the site of the later Abbey to meet the diverted Watling Street near the west end of Sopwell Lane. Sopwell Lane itself originally continued along the line of Riverside Road, and ultimately, to London. Following the dissolution of the monastery Edward Lee acquired the site of Sopwell Nunnery, together with an estate that extended north-east as far as the modern Colney Heath Lane. This forced the realignment of the medieval London Road along what is now Old London Road, a line that was only superseded when the present London Road was cut in 1796.The other streets within the medieval town are Dagnall Street, Spicer Street and Wellclose Street. Catherine Street was certainly also in existence by the 14th century. The only medieval streets on the east side of St Peter's Street were Hatfield Road (medieval name Cock Lane) and Victoria Street (formerly Sweetbriar or Shropshire Lane).

5.3.2 *Defences- the Tonman Ditch. (Figs. 1,3-4)* for most of the Middle Ages the town centre was defended by the Tonman Ditch (sometimes called Monks Ditch). The

ditch is first referred to in the 14th century records of the acts of the Abbots of St Albans[4] where it is mentioned as part of the description of the borough boundary in 1327. Its precise course, however, is still uncertain. Records refer to it as running from Cock Lane (Hatfield Road) to Sopwell Lane. It is also mentioned on the north of Verulam Road. It has been seen in excavations in Upper Marlborough Road, on the east side of Keyfield Terrace and less certainly on the south side of Kings Road. Observation of building work on the first two sites has recorded a substantial ditch, up to 3m deep and filled with dark, humus rich silt and soil. The marked change of level that is still apparent today between the surface of Upper Marlborough Road and the properties on its western side is due to the presence of the ditch beneath the road. Deep ditches under Chime Square and Copperfield Nursery in Church Street, however, may have been associated with St Peter's Grange which Abbot John de la Mare defended with a large ditch following the Peasants' Revolt in 1381.

5.3.4. *Boundaries. The medieval borough and parish boundaries* The line of the medieval borough boundary was recorded in detail in 1327 in the G*esta Abbatum*[4] andit remained the same after the dissolution, and indeed until new boundaries were created in the 1830s. For most of its course it adhered to the supposed line of the Tonman Ditch, although it clearly extended beyond it in some places, particularly on the south of the town. From Sopwell Lane, it continued in a more or less straight line on the west of the modern Cottonmill Lane as far as the river. South of the river it turned west along Eywood Road to the foot of St Stephen's Hill and from there to the river at the foot of Holywell Hill. It then followed the line of the river back to the ford at St Michael's where it rejoined the line of the Tonman Ditch. Both Kingsbury Manor and St Michaels village lay outside the borough.

5.3.5 In the Middle Ages the topography of the town gave rise to pronounced differences in the lengths of individual plots. These plots (known as burgage plots) comprised the house itself, any out-buildings and an area of yard, garden or paddock. On the west side of Holywell Hill and the south side of the Vintry and Church Street very short plots extended from the street frontage to the monastery precinct wall. By contrast, plots on the east side of Holywell Hill and St Peters Street, were unusually long, stretching back from the street frontage to the Tonman Ditch, 250m to the west. The buildings and associated ovens and outbuildings to their rear accounted for a strip up to 50m wide along the street frontage. On the west side of French Row curving burgage plots linked frontages on French Row with those in Dagnall Street. Until very recently many medieval burgage plots survived as long narrow gardens and yards. Since the 1980s, however, many have been obliterated; today they only survive over restricted areas in George Street and south of London Road.

Medieval Sites – Key Sites (Figs 5 – 7)

25 St Mary de Pre Nunnery Fig 5
26 Sopwell Nunnery Fig 7
27 St Germanus Chapel Fig 7
28 St Mary Magdalen Chapel Fig76
29 Part of Tonman Ditch and Bank in Upper Marlborough Road Fig 7
30 Part of Tonman Ditch in Keyfield Terrace Fig 7
31 Ditches under Grange Street, Carlisle Avenue and Church Street Fig 7
32 Surviving burgage plots, Fishpool Street Fig 7
33 Surviving burgage plots, Pageant Road / Albert Street Fig 7

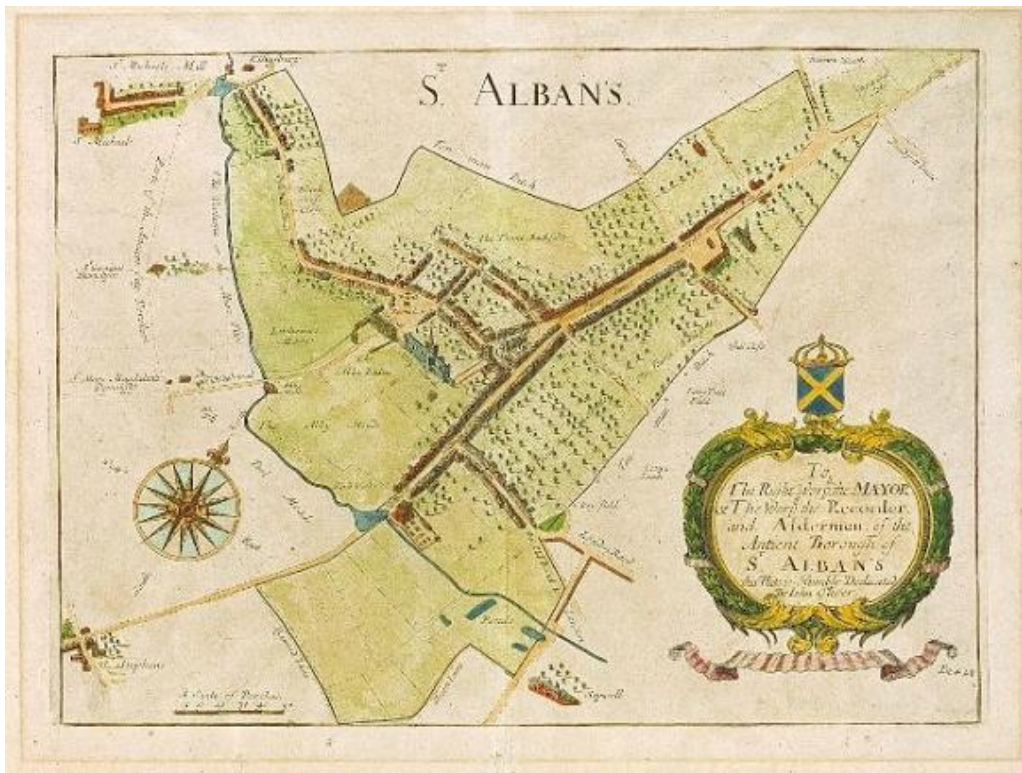[4] [4] Gesta Abbatum Sancti Albani. Ed. Riley. Rolls Society 1853

Fig. 8 18th–century copy of Benjamin Hare's map of St Albans in 1634. The map shows the line of the medieval town boundary and the Tonman Ditch. It also shows how the majority of the monastic buildings, including St Andrew's chapel had already disappeared less than a century after the dissolution.

6 THE VALUE OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE COUNCIL'S OVERALL AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

6.1 TOURISM AND LEISURE Figures released by English Heritage[5] record expenditure in 2003 of £60 billion at heritage sites, creating employment for 7.5% of the population. It is estimated that 63 million visits were made to historic sites in England in 2003. The survey also suggests that nearly 75% of foreign visitors to this country include at least one visit to a historic site during their stay.

6.2 St Albans is fortunate in possessing a wide range of historic and archaeological sites, and heritage attractions have the potential to be a cornerstone of the local tourism and leisure industry. In 2001 4901 jobs (equivalent to 2,937 full time) in the St Albans District were supported by the tourist industry. For the same year the estimated value of tourism to the District was £148 million.[6]

Above – Beech Bottom Dyke – A badly presented and maintained heritage asset. In the places where it is not overgrown, it is being badly eroded by bicycle runs.

6.3 St Albans Council recognises the importance of the heritage and is committed to developing its Tourist Industry. This is reflected in the Council's Tourism strategy. Identifying undeveloped tourist assets and raising the profile of St Albans as an historic city can only benefit the District's tourist industry.

6.4 *QUALITY OF LIFE* The Council recognises the role the City's heritage can play in raising the quality of life, and encouraging social cohesion. These aspects are addressed in the Council's Community and Cultural Strategies and in paras 7.3.1-6.

6.5 Many local residents gain a deep and satisfying 'sense of place' from living in St. Albans. A widespread interest in the past is demonstrated in a number of ways, notably by the popularity of television programmes (e.g. Time Team, Meet the Ancestors, Restoration) and by attendance at local heritage events (Archaeology Heritage Open days, Living History events, talks and presentations on heritage matters).

6.6 At a local level residents are becoming more alert to changes to their environment in all its forms and better motivated and empowered to participate in community projects and in local decision making. An example of this involvement can be seen in the public response to the local archaeological society's petition to the Secretary of State concerning plough damage to the Roman town site and in local participation in heritage conservation schemes.

6.7 This interest however is not always well articulated and so may not be fully communicated to decision makers and organisations not primarily concerned with

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[5] *Heritage Counts* English Heritage 2004
[6] Figures from SADC Tourism Strategy

heritage or conservation issues. There are also social groups that are not fully involved in it, and may feel excluded from it.

6.8 *CULTURAL / EDUCATIONAL* In very broad terms the value of the archaeological and historic remains surviving in St Albans is as a source of evidence for the history of an area that had been continuously occupied for over 2000 years. As such it is of exceptional importance in gaining an understanding of the way in which society, life styles, beliefs and economies have changed from prehistoric to early modern times.

6.9 The National Curriculum Key Stages 1-3 examines life in Roman, Medieval, Tudor, Stuart and Victorian times. At secondary level archaeology can be used in schools to teach skills such as: investigation and evaluation data analysis and communication skills. At further educational levels it can develop IT skills, and the ability to evaluate and balance different types of evidence from a wide range of disciplines (e.g. scientific research or environmental studies).

6.10 Archaeology and local history can also demonstrate the extent of multicultural influences in the past and so offer lessons for the future.

6.11 Archaeology and Local History play important roles in less formal education. The St Albans and Architectural Society and the St Albans Archaeology Group organise programmes of lectures and outings, and participate in archaeological fieldwork projects in association with the St Albans Museum Service. The St Albans City Guides, the Abbey Guides and the St Albans Museum all offer regular events, talks and guided walks. The local branch of the Young Archaeologists Club, organised by the St Albans Museum service offers organised activities for children aged between 9 – 16 and is extremely popular. National Archaeology Days, Heritage Open Days, and Living History events are organised by the Museum Service and all provide opportunities for enjoying the local heritage. Under the Portable Antiquities Scheme the Museum houses a liaison officer who provides an identification and recording service for local metal-detecting groups.

7   DEVELOPING AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRATEGY

7.1   *Development Control*

7.1.1 This is at the front-line of conserving and enhancing the buried archaeological remains. Development Control policies are drawn up to protect the historic environment as a whole, especially where important archaeological and historic sites and buildings are affected by development. The underlying premises guiding the Council's management of the historic environments are that:

- Archaeological remains form an important environmental resource which, since it is non-renewable, requires careful conservation.

- Accurate information is a pre-requisite for the proper management and conservation of this resource

- Archaeological and historic remains should be preserved for future generations, but at the same time they should be enhanced for the benefit of local residents and visitors.

7.1.2 Against this background the Council's policies aim to:

- Conserve the archaeological and historical resource without stifling present day growth and development

- Mitigate adverse effects on it through the development control process

- Manage and enhance the resource for the benefit of a wider public

Above - Excavating the foundations of a Roman temple at Oysterfields. The remains survived immediately below the shallow topsoil and were fully excavated before development started.

What and where are the important sites and areas, and how sustainable are they?

7.1.3 Current government guidance stresses the importance of conserving important archaeological remains, whether or not they are scheduled as ancient monuments. Not everything is equally important but it is vital that the heritage as a whole is sustainable if it is to continue to be a resource for future generations. Assessing the relative value of buried, and hence largely unknown, deposits in different areas of the town, and matching them with the appropriate responses in terms of development control is an essential aspect of proper archaeological management.

7.1.4 Fig 4 indicates the relative survival of archaeological deposits in St Albans. The thickness of these deposits varies from over 3 metres in some areas of good preservation (for instance in the centre of the Roman town around St Michael's Church) to a few centimetres of deposits surviving in the bases of pits and ditches (termed 'cut features') in heavily eroded areas, or in areas where human activities in later periods have substantially modified earlier remains. There are also large areas in the medieval town where there is still not enough detailed evidence to allow a judgement to be made, although there is a high probability that archaeological remains survive (even if only as 'cut features').

7.1.5 The mere thickness of surviving deposits, however, is not necessarily an indication of their importance. Even poorly preserved and truncated deposits can provide irreplaceable evidence for the history of the town. For instance, the lowest centimetres in the base of a buried ditch or grave, cut into the subsoil beneath a 19th-century building, could represent the only surviving evidence for a turning point in the District's, or even the country's, history.

7.1.6 Effective heritage management requires detailed and reliable information. Archaeological information about St Albans up until 1600AD is contained in the St Albans Urban Archaeological Database [UAD]. This formed the basis for a rigorous academic assessment of the archaeology of St Albans[5] and it is important that it is kept up-to-date. It is equally important to remain aware of new developments in research and understanding which could affect the importance given to elements of the historic environment.

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[5] *Albans Buried Towns* by R Niblett and I Thompson, Oxbow Books 2005

7.1.7 Figs 5 - 7 show the key sites and areas of the town where remains survive that have the potential to provide important historic data.

7.1.8 The information illustrated by Figs 4-7, has been used to classify sites according to their archaeological potential and value. These are shown on Fig 9.

Above - Excavating the remains of the medieval monastic brewery immediately beneath those of a Victorian silk mill, Abbey Mill Lane, 1988.

7.1.9 The vulnerability of remains varies enormously from site to site. In some areas, rare and important deposits are buried beneath later layers. In situations like this it may be possible to adapt foundations to protect important archaeological deposits while sacrificing a small percentage of overlying, non-critical remains. On the other hand, in areas like the Kingsbury Manor and the Medieval Cloister Garden (Key sites 15 and 19) the reverse is true; here crucially important and unusual remains are likely to lie very close to the surface. Even if mitigation measures were agreed, the presence of builders' plant on the site, the excavation of service trenches etc would be likely to cause significant damage to these rare and irreplaceable archaeological remains.

7.1.10 The most realistic way forward for St Albans District Council is to adopt specific criteria against which policies can be consistently observed to ensure sustainable development by:

- Exercising stringent controls to maintain the sustainability of key sites and areas with high archaeological potential as shown on Fig 9. These areas include Scheduled ancient monuments and the areas identified as ones for local preservation in the 1994 District Plan.

- Controlling, and in some cases restricting, development on sites with less potential or which are less sustainable.

- Monitoring development (e.g. by watching briefs and / or recording) on sites which assessment or evaluation suggests are of less or uncertain archaeological potential.

7.1.10 Development does not represent the only threat to archaeological remains. Many sites, including key sites, are vulnerable to works carried out as Permitted Development. There is a need to consider ways of protecting archaeological remains from some Permitted Development Rights on some sites.

7.1.12 Agricultural activities and forestry pose a substantial threat to buried archaeological remains including sites covered by this strategy (e.g. areas LPA5, AM8 Fig.9). The District Archaeology Service needs to continue to work closely with the Countryside Management Service, and with the Countryside officer in the Archaeology Section of Herts County Council to develop Countryside Stewardship schemes for the management of archaeological sites in more rural parts of the District.

7.2. The need to update existing archaeological policies

7.2.1 The 1994 District Plan was drafted in the late 1980s, before the introduction of PPG 15 and PPG16. As a result it does not fully reflect current government guidance in respect of archaeological and historic remains. Although PPG15 is largely concerned with the built historic environment rather than buried archaeological deposits, it is important that the Council's archaeological policies are in line with both PPG15 and 16 in order to create a holistic approach to the management of the City's heritage.

7.2.2 PPG 16 was issued in November 1990 and since then has become one of the most important concepts in British archaeology. It now forms the basis for the majority of excavations carried out in the country.

7.2.3 Both PPG 15 and PPG 16 place on developers applying for planning permission, the duty to provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site to enable the planning authority to make an informed decision on the likely effect of the development. PPG 16 states that (*para 21a*):

'---it is reasonable for the planning authority to request the prospective developer to arrange for an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out before any decision on the planning application is taken.'
It goes on to say (*para. 22*)
'---if necessary authorities will need to consider refusing permission for proposals which are inadequately documented'.

This requirement that developers arrange pre-determination assessments and evaluations, is not covered in the wording of the existing policies.

7.2.4 The Council's District Plan Policies 110 and 111 are geared to providing means for excavating sites, rather than their preservation. However, PPG 16 starts from the premise that preservation of archaeological remains, including those on non-scheduled sites, is the best practice:

'Where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation'. (para 8)
This is amplified in para 16
'Authorities should bear in mind that not all nationally important remains meriting preservation will necessarily be scheduled; such remains and, in appropriate circumstances, other unscheduled archaeological remains of more local importance, may also be identified in development plans as particularly worthy of preservation'.

7.2.5 The PPG recognises that preservation is not always desirable (because of the level of importance of the site) or feasible. In such cases it recommends that full excavation and recording be carried out before development commences. Here again the duty of arranging the excavation, recording and publishing the results is placed on the developer. This is not made sufficiently clear in the existing policies

'Where planning authorities decide that the physical preservation in situ of archaeological remains is not justified in the circumstance of the case, and that developments resulting in the destruction of the archaeological remains should proceed, it would be entirely reasonable for the planning authority to

satisfy itself before granting planning permission that the developer has made appropriate and satisfactory provision for the excavation and recording of the remains. Such excavation and recording should be carried out before development commences, working to a project brief prepared by the planning authority' (para 25)

7.2.6   The Council's District Plan Policies in the 1994 District Plan Reviews do not put sufficient stress on the benefits of agreeing mitigation measures on significant sites. PPG16 points out that:

'When important remains are known to exist or when archaeologists have good reason to believe that important remains exist, developers will be able to help by preparing sympathetic designs, using, for example, foundations which avoid disturbing the remains altogether, or minimise damage by raising ground levels under a proposed new structure, or by careful siting of landscaped or open areas. ----If physical preservation in situ is not feasible, an archaeological excavation for the purposes of 'preservation by record' may be an acceptable alternative. From the archaeological point of view this should be regarded as a second best option' (paras 12-13).

7.2.7   Present District Plan Policies also make no reference to the scale of developments. An application for the construction of a small extension or a single house in an archaeological area might have a negligible effect on the archaeological resource as a whole, whereas a large-scale development such as a golf course or large housing development in the same area could be highly detrimental. There are also large areas in the District where there is little or no evidence for archaeological activity, but where the scale of a proposed work is such that there are grounds for suspecting that a previously unknown archaeological site will be revealed in the course of groundwork somewhere in the area involved.

7.2.8   The current adopted District Plan Review (1994) has three policies on archaeology:

- Policy 109 : Scheduled ancient monuments

- Policy 110 : Archaeological sites for local preservation

- Policy 111 : Archaeological sites where planning permission may be subject to a recording condition

7.2.9   In view of the considerations outlined in paras 7.2.1-7, and of the importance of basing the relevant policies on Government guidance in PPG 15 on 'Planning and the Historic Environment' and PPG 16 on 'Archaeology and Planning', the Council considers that revised policy guidance is needed to take account of:

- Government guidance in PPG 16 on 'Archaeology and Planning'

- Recent archaeological findings which have changed the perception of prehistoric, Roman and medieval occupation over wide areas of the District.

7.2.10 PPG 16 states that:

'….local plans ….should include policies for the protection, enhancement and preservation of sites of archaeological interest and of their settings. The proposals map should define the areas and sites to which the policies and proposals apply.'

7.2.11 The PPG also advises that:

'Archaeological remains identified and scheduled as being of national importance should normally be earmarked in development plans for preservation. Authorities should bear in mind that not all nationally importance remains meriting preservation will necessarily be scheduled; such remains, and in appropriate circumstances, other unscheduled archaeological remains of more local importance, may also be identified in development plans as particularly worthy of preservation.'

7.2.12 Policies 109-111 fail to reflect PPG 16 in that they do not:

(i)   include any requirement for archaeological evaluation prior to determination of planning applications;

(ii)   place the burden of recording archaeological and historic remains on the developer;

(iii)   make sufficient provision for preservation of remains, except on ancient monuments;

(iv)   make any provision for considering archaeology on large-scale developments outside the areas defined in Policies 109-111;

(v)   refer to the setting of sites of archaeological interest.

7.2.13 The Council is proposing to include four policies to provide broad policy guidance on archaeological areas and sites as shown on Fig 9, as follows:

(i)   <u>Scheduled ancient monuments</u>. This policy would replace Policy 109. Scheduled ancient monuments are the most important archaeological sites. They are of national importance and are scheduled by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. In St Albans District there are 18 scheduled ancient monuments consisting of 17 sites listed in Policy 109 and the model of the Mohne Dam at the Building Research Establishment, Garston. Since 1994, sites AM.9 (Beech Bottom) and AM.13 (Sopwell Nunnery) have been enlarged. As in the 1994 Plan, there will be a strong presumption for preservation. Thirteen of the 18 scheduled sites lie within the historic centre of St Albans. Planning applications for development which would adversely affect a scheduled site or its setting will be refused, unless prior scheduled monument consent has been obtained from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Sentence 2 of Policy 109 should be deleted as the DCMS considers amenity issues when deciding applications for scheduled monument consent;

(ii)   <u>Unscheduled archaeological areas of national or regional importance</u>. This policy would replace Policy 110. Eleven sites are currently listed in Policy 110 and five of these lie within the historic centre of St Albans. They should be covered by the

new policy, although part of site AS.LP.7 (Roman occupation area, north of Verulamium, St Albans) is now regarded as being of only local importance, so should be covered by point (iii) below. There should be a presumption for the preservation of archaeological remains in these areas and development should be refused on archaeological grounds, unless applicants can convince the Council that important archaeological remains would not be destroyed or the character of the site adversely affected;

(iii)   <u>Areas of more local archaeological significance</u>. This policy would replace Policy 111. There are currently 48 areas listed under this policy in the 1994 District Plan Review. Two areas, ASR23 and 25 cover substantial areas of the historic centre of St Albans and its surroundings. It is not proposed to alter the boundaries of ASR23 and 25 significantly although part of AS.LP.7 should be added to AS.R.23. In areas of local archaeological significance, the emphasis should be on evaluation of development proposals, to see which of the approaches referred to in paragraph 9.22 are appropriate in the circumstances of the case;

(iv)   <u>Sites with uncertain archaeological potential</u>. This policy would apply to sites not identified in the Plan, but where there may be some archaeological interest. The policy would apply to developments of over 2 hectares in certain defined circumstances, for example, sites within 100 metres of a defined archaeological area and sites within a landscape with demonstrably high levels of archaeological or historical occupation.

7.2.14 On sites of uncertain archaeological potential, evaluation may be required to see which of the approaches outlined in the previous paragraph are appropriate. In addition to the policies referred to in paragraph 7.2.13 there should be a policy (or policies) that gives further guidance on how that Council will take into account archaeological considerations when dealing with planning applications. Where appropriate, the Council will require an archaeological evaluation before a decision on a planning application is made. Evaluation may involve a desk-based assessment and/or an archaeological field evaluation which may include limited trial trenching (if important archaeological remains may exist). Based on the results of the evaluation, the Council will decide which of the following approaches should be pursued:

- preservation of remains;

- permit development, subject to excavation and recording of remains, publication of the results (if important remains are discovered) and mitigation measures to minimise damage to remains;

- permit development, subject to a watching brief to ensure that archaeological remains uncovered during development are recorded;

- permit development without any archaeological conditions (if the evaluation indicates that there are unlikely to be any important remains);

7.2.15 On some sites, more than one of the above approaches may be appropriate.

7.2.16 Mitigation measures (see bullet point 2 in paragraph 7.2.14) may require sympathetic designs. Such designs are likely to involve:

- benign foundations which avoid disturbing the remains altogether (for example, by sealing remains underneath buildings) or using mini piles to minimise disturbance;

- raising ground levels under a proposed new structure;

- careful siting of landscaped or open areas.

7.2.17 Most archaeological remains discovered on a particular site are the property of the landowner. However, the Council will seek agreements with developers, that arrangements will be made with St Albans Museums (before work starts on site) for the long term deposition and storage of any remains that may be found during excavation or building construction.

Text to this effect should replace paragraph 2 in current Policy 111.

Above - An archaeological 'watching brief' being maintained on a service trench in Verulamium Park in 2004. Although the area is a scheduled ancient monument, and a key site where well preserved archaeological remains could be expected, prior knowledge of the likely depth of Roman deposits and the position of earlier excavations allowed the work to proceed without pre-determination field work. Significant archaeological remains, including a mosaic floor, were recorded and reburied without damage

7.3 Achieving the objectives.

7.3.1 The reforms proposed as a result of the Government's Heritage Protection Review come into force from 2010. Management and protection of the historic environment with continue to depend on the provision of detailed, accurate and up-to-date information. At present the prime repository for this data is the Historic Environment Record [HER] comprising the Sites and Monuments Record [SMR], held by Herts County Council [HCC] and the St Albans Urban Archaeological Database [UAD] with is held by St Albans City and District Council [SADC] Under the current arrangement archaeological information is provided by HCC for areas outside the historic core of St Albans, and for sites post-dating AD1600, and

SADC providing information on the historic core of the City. To ensure full coverage and access to archaeological information for the District on a comprehensive basis it is important the current informal partnership arrangement between HCC and SADC is maintained and formalised by means of a joint programme of data enhancement and data exchange. Such an agreement should also include providing access to the archaeological information by non-professionals such as local communities and schools

7.3.2 There is a government manifesto commitment to make access to local authority Historic Environment Records a statutory duty by 2010. As the St Albans UAD forms part of the Historic Environment Record for Herts, it will almost certainly be included within the performance measures for the new statutory duty. In addition, government proposes to introduce a performance indicator for historic environment records for 2007-8 in the Culture Block of Comprehensive Perfomance Assessments. This proposal relates to all the proposed actions in the strategy but particularly to actions 3.5.

7.3.3 Recommendations by the National Archaeological and Historic Data Service [AHDS] should be implemented, particularly in respect of the recently launched OASIS project which enables the results of recent archaeological work to be put on line.[6] This will enable the Council to:

- Record the number of archaeological mitigation strategies agreed with developers

- Indicate what is being protected successfully

- Gauge the amount of new information gathered

- Increase public access to new archaeological information

7.3.4 Many of the pre-Roman remains in St Albans lie in open land. Modern agricultural and forestry practises can be as damaging to archaeological remains as road schemes or building work[7]. The Council has recently been instrumental in securing an agricultural management scheme over the northern part of the Roman town (Key Area 11) which will ensure the sustainability of critically important archaeological deposits. The Council should support and encourage the setting up of similar environmentally sustainable agri-environmental management schemes in other areas in the District that have particular archaeological sensitivity. The effectiveness of agri-environmental strategies in conserving the historic environment should also be measured. The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [DEFRA] is currently reviewing its Quality of Life Indicators, which could then be used to develop complementary heritage conservation indicators in St Albans District.

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[6] OASIS/AHDS document. 2004
[7] See English Heritage publication *The Past under the Plough,* 2004

7.4 Engaging with the community

7.4.1 There are different perceptions among individuals and groups of the value of the historic environment in different parts of the town. Emerging Government guidance stresses the importance of community involvement in local decision making[8]. It will be necessary to develop and implement policies to make information held by the Council on the historic environment publicly accessible, thus empowering local residents to engage effectively in the decision-making process.

7.4.2 With greater community involvement the Service is likely to be increasingly scrutinised and challenged. The Council must ensure that it has access to sufficient expertise and that information is constantly up-dated and re-assessed in order to engage positively with partners and stakeholders.

7.4.3 Many stakeholders find it difficult to gain access to information about St Albans' heritage, particularly in regard to the results of archaeological work. Although recent publications have addressed this problem to some extent, difficulties remain, especially for those who are not specialists in heritage fields.

7.4.4 There is a need to identify and promote the use of new technology for spreading information. Strategies are currently being developed by regional organisations and the County archaeological service at Herts County Council for putting heritage information on the web in an accessible and useful form, while at the same time protecting sites from illegal looting[9]. Information can be presented at different levels for local communities and leisure organisation, educational bodies, children and developers. It is important that the District Archaeology Service continues to play a full part in the development and implementation of these strategies.

7.5 Tourism, Leisure and Cultural life

7.5.1 The Council is committed to developing its tourist industry and it is in this area that the historic environment of the City and District can play a major role. The Council also aims to stimulate greater local appreciation and enjoyment of the heritage.

7.5.2 Historic and archaeological remains are clearly more likely to be appreciated if they are accessible, both physically and intellectually. Remains must be properly explained, published and maintained, and wherever possible sites should be publicly accessible.

7.5.3 Unless it is properly managed, however, opening a site to visitors can threaten its fabric and amenity value. It is important to balance the need to conserve sites for future generations and to capitalise on the cultural and leisure opportunities they can offer visitors today.

7.5.4 The proper display of archaeological monuments in situ can represent a major challenge. Even remains that were comparatively well preserved when first uncovered quickly deteriorate when exposed, unless carefully protected from the effects of weathering and vandalism. The protection and maintenance of remains

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[8] *Force for our Future DCMS 2001 page 28*
[9] See for instance Norfolk County Council's website*, 'Unlocking Norfolk's Past'*

are on-going costs, and most remains need a certain amount of explanation if they are to be meaningful to a wide audience.

7.5.5 Education, interpretation and effective marketing provide considerable scope for fostering a greater awareness and appreciation of the City and District's past with tourists, local visitors and residents alike. Heritage attractions can also generate significant amounts of income. The number of different owners and organisations involved, however, can lead to a lack of `joined-up thinking`. For instance, there is a danger of a proliferation of different varieties of information boards in the City, some giving conflicting or misleading information. There is also a danger that without an integrated approach to the promotion of heritage assets, resources may be wasted and there could be a duplication of effort. (See also the Council's Tourism and Cultural strategies and the Museum Development Plan).

7.5.6 Tourists and local visitors do not necessarily have to see the City and District of St Albans as a series of individual sites. By up-dating and promoting the presentation and marketing of related sites, projects could be developed linking a number of different heritage interest together, for instance, as a series of themed `heritage trails' or touring routes.

7.5.7 Table 1 (*below p.33)* details sites in the Historic Core of St Albans that have the potential to attract visitors. These fall into four main categories.
- *Category 1 Interesting, Accessible and well presented*
- *Category 2 Interesting and Accessible but with the potential for better presentation*
- *Category 3 Limited accessibility and presentation   (e.g. only on 'open days' or 'heritage weekends')*
- *Category 4 Not generally accessible*
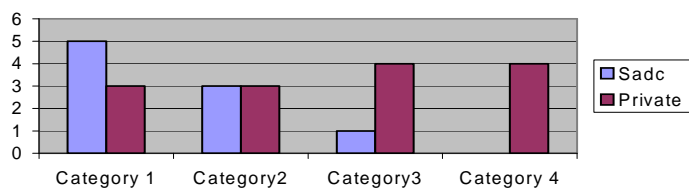
Table I

	Category	Status	Owner[10]
Verulamium Park Hypocaust	1	Scheduled Monument	SADC
Verulamium Park Roman Gateway	2	Scheduled Monument	SADC
Verulamium Park Roman Walls	2	Scheduled Monument	SADC
Gorhambury Estate Roman Walls	4	Scheduled Monument	PRIVATE
Roman Theatre	2	Scheduled Monument	PRIVATE
Devils Dyke Earthwork	4	Scheduled Monument	PRIVATE
Beech Bottom Dyke Earthwork	2	Scheduled Monument	SADC
Kingsbury Barn	3	Grade II*	PRIVATE
Kingsbury Mill	1	Listed	PRIVATE
Sopwell Nunnery	2	Scheduled Monument	SADC
Bacons House, Gorhambury	2	Scheduled Monument	PRIVATE
Abbey Church	1	Grade I	Church

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[10] The Roman walls and gateway in Verulamium Park, Sopwell Priory and Bacons House are in English Heritage Guardianship who consequently has responsibility for the management of these sites.

Abbey Gatehouse	3	Scheduled Monument	PRIVATE
St Michael's Church (Doom Painting)	2	Grade II	Church
Town Hall Courthouse	2	Grade II*	SADC
Town Hall Cells	2	Grade II	SADC
Clock Tower	3	Scheduled Monument	SADC
Verulamium Museum	1		SADC
Museum of St Albans	1		SADC
Organ Museum	2		PRIVATE
White Hart Painting	4	Grade II	PRIVATE

7.5.8 The figures in table 1 demonstrate that of the 21 sites within the Historic core of St Albans that have the potential to attract visitors and/or form part of a heritage trail, only 5 fall into category 1 as being easily accessible and well presented. A further 9 are accessible but are not well presented or very informative to the non-specialist. The remaining 6 sites are either of very restricted accessibility or are not publicly accessible at all. The Council owns 10 of the 20 sites, of which only 3 fall into category 1.

8 THE DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE: ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

8.1 The District Archaeologist is based in the Council's Development and Enterprise Department. The main function of the post is to conserve and enhance the District's historic environment, primarily through the Development Control process in view of the pressures on it resulting from development schemes, mineral extraction, transport schemes and modern agricultural practices. The District Archaeologist also agrees and monitors conditions on planning consents which are designed to ensure the sustainability of the archaeological resource. An essential element provided by the service is the maintenance of up-to-date, accurate data on the state of the historic environment, critical assessment of the value, potential and sustainability of remains, and the dissemination of information on it to the Council's customers and stakeholders. This dissemination takes the form of published reports, archived information and the establishment and maintenance of archaeological databanks, and efforts are made to ensure that the information is provided in a form that is accessible to the non specialist as well as to the academic and archaeological community.

8.2 As an essential preliminary to achieving the Council's objective in relation to the historic environment an analysis of the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats affecting the Service has been undertaken [SWOT analysis].

8.2.1 Strengths
  i. Large amount of detailed archaeological data has been accumulated.
  ii. St Albans is one of the few historic towns with a detailed academic analysis of the state of the **buried archaeological** resource.[11]
  iii. The Council is committed to conserving and enhancing the Historic Environment of the District.
  iv. There is a high level of interest among residents in the Historic Environment of the District.

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[11] *Albans Buried Towns* R. Niblett and I Thompson, 2005, Oxbow Books and English Heritage.

v.   The District Archaeologist is integrated into the Planning Service ensuring that the Historic Environment is a material consideration in the Council's decision making process.

vi. The District Archaeology Service liases closely with local residents groups, other Council Departments, and regional and national agencies.

vii. The District Archaeology Service has a high reputation in the archaeological profession.

8.2 .2 Weaknesses

i.   There is a great development pressure on many archaeological and historic areas.

ii.   Lack of staff time is endangering the continued archiving of archaeological data and the maintenance of computerised databases.

iii. There is no proper cover in the absence of the current District Archaeologist.

iv.   There is an absence of published and archived information on several of the Council's own excavations in the District.

v.   It is difficult for stakeholders to obtain information on archaeological work in the District.

vi.   The records of unpublished excavations are contained on paper files and could be lost (e.g. due to fire, flood, etc).

vii. Some heritage sites are not well presented, and are vulnerable to vandalism and general deterioration.

viii. There is a lack of easily accessible information on historic areas of the City, available to the general public.

8.2.3   Opportunities

i.   New Technology and publishing on the Internet provide new and effective ways of making heritage information available to a wide range of stakeholders and interests.

ii.   New Technology also provides an effective, and relatively safe way of archiving information

iii. There are opportunities for participating in national and regional schemes for publishing heritage information using new technology. Some of these schemes attract government and/or European funding.

iv.   Many local resident and heritage groups are keen to undertake heritage conservation schemes. The lottery-funded Local Heritage Initiative is aimed at helping such groups in partnership with local authorities. The District Archaeology Section has already been a partner to one such scheme, and opportunities to extend this should be encouraged.

v.   DEFRA are undertaking an increasing role in conserving and enhancing the Historic Environment in rural areas. The Council should participate in and encourage such schemes. The management agreement reached in the case of the Roman site of Verulamium is an example of successful working between the Council and the other bodies involved.

vi.   Several University Departments have expressed an interest in undertaking archaeological research in St Albans. This could attract external funding.

8.2.4   Threats.
 i.   The retirement of the District Archaeologist in 2006 could lead to a loss of information and a fall in the efficiency of the Service until the replacement was fully established in post.
 ii. Government changes may lead to extra work devolving from English Heritage to the District Archaeology Service without the provision of extra resources.(See above paras 7.3.1-7.3.2)
 iii. The loss of the space and flexibility provided by Kyngston House will make it more difficult to liase with residents' groups.
 iv. Changes in planning requirements may lead to greater pressure on historic and archaeological sites in the District.

8.2.5 Issues
     There are 11 principal issues that need to be addressed before 2007. These are
   1.   Adopt an agreed strategy and timetable
   2.   Develop and enforce regional and local polices in agreement with stakeholders
   3.   Encourage proper management schemes for conserving and enhancing the historic environment in partnership with HCC
   4.   Raise public awareness of St Albans' heritage
   5.   Provide high quality information
   6.   Promote schemes to increase the enjoyment of St Albans' heritage by a wide public
   7.   Improve the access to, and presentation of heritage sites
   8.   Make archaeological and historic information easily accessible
   9.   Promote St Albans' Historic Environment as an economic and tourist resource.
   10. Work with HCC to develop the Heritage Lottery bid to make archaeological information available on line. Investigate different levels of information to be placed on line in relation to differing needs (e.g. schools and educational institutions, planners, tourists etc).
   11.   Investigate opportunities to involve local schools in participating in archaeological work in the District .

9.0   PLAN OF ACTION

9.1   The analysis in the preceding sections has identified 11 issues that need to be addressed in order to achieve the objectives set out in f this strategy.
9.2   Resolving these issues demands a detailed knowledge of the complexities of the City and District's archaeology and an understanding of the enormous amount of data that has accumulated. It also requires computer and GIS skills and a familiarity with the development control and planning process as well as the relevant legislation. In addition to this, proper implementation will need considerable field archaeology experience in order to undertake the day to day monitoring of work by archaeological contractors working on development sites.
9.3   The local knowledge and expertise that the strategy demands cannot be acquired overnight, even by an experienced professional archaeologist. The District Archaeologist, however, is retiring in March 2006. In view of this, the proposed action plan has been specifically framed in order to address the need to transfer the management of the District Archaeology service in good order to a successor.
9.4   Table 2 sets the proposed action plan for implementing this strategy until the end of 2007.

Table 2 - Plan of Action

	Issue	Priority	Action	Resource Implication	Timetable
1.1	Ensure that the Councils archaeological policies are revised and undated	**H**	Prepare policies on archaeology for inclusion in the St Albans Development Plan Documents	Part of the Local Development plan programme	**ongoing**
1.2	Ensure that regional and local policies conserve and enhance the historic environment for the benefit of the present day community and in the future	**H**	Re-draft existing information leaflet explaining the role of archaeology in the Development Control process	Funding needed for copying/publication	**2004/7**
1.3		**H**	Draw up a Document for the sustainable management of the Historic Environment in the City and District taking account of the results of the Government's Heritage Protection Review	Funding needed for copying/publication	**2004/7**
1.4		**M**	Participate in regional county and district schemes for protecting the historic environment	Expenses for attending seminars/workshops etc	**Ongoing**
2.1	Seek to ensure the sustainability of the St Albans' historic environment through appropriate development and agricultural management schemes	**H**	Monitor all development proposals	Resource implications include adequate long-term staffing and funding	**Ongoing**
2.2		**H**	Contribute to environmental assessments including mineral extraction and road work schemes	Resource implications include adequate long-term funding and staffing	**Ongoing**
2.3		**H**	Advise local regional and national bodies	Resource implications include adequate long-term funding and staffing	**Ongoing**
2.4		**H**	Provide advice for members and officers in determining planning proposals	Adequate long-term funding and staffing is essential	**Ongoing**

	Issue	Priority	Action	Resource Implication	Timetable
2.5		H	Monitor development led excavation, and publication	Adequate long-term funding and staffing is essential	**Ongoing**
2.6		M	Work with other agencies to conserve heritage in non built environments through new initiatives and management agreements	Resource implications include adequate long-term funding and staffing	**Ongoing**
3.1	Foster informed public awareness of the historic environment and participation in it by stakeholders and residents.	H	Advise amenity and historical groups in their own projects and researches	Resource implications include adequate long-term funding and staffing	**Ongoing**
3.2		M	Publish an academic monograph accessing the archaeology of the Historic core of Verulamium	Published, April 2005 by English Heritage as part of its monograph series. There are no financial implications for the Council	**2004/5**
3.3		M	Respond promptly to enquiries relating to the history and archaeology of the District	Resource implications include adequate long-term funding and staffing	**Ongoing**
3.4		M	Encourage research by archaeologists and historians into aspects of the District's past	Resource implications include adequate long-term funding and staffing	**Ongoing**
3.5		M	In partnership with Herts County Council develop archaeological databases for utilisation on the web as an educational and public information and formalise arrangements for sharing data	Possibility of Heritage Lottery funding	**2005/7**
3.6			Produce report on SADC excavations on the east side of the Abbey precinct	Publication cost	**2005**

	Issue		Priority	Action	Resource Implication	Timetable
3.7				Produce report on the SADC excavations at St Stephens Roman cemetery	Publication cost	**2006**
4.1	Provide high quality information on the historic environment in order to inform decision makers and stakeholders and to respond positively to challenge		**H**	Maintain archaeological databases and archives	Resource implications include adequate long-term funding and staffing	**Ongoing**
4.2			**H**	Maintain GIS and enhance based plans showing the location of archaeological remains	Resource implications include adequate long-term funding and staffing	**Ongoing**
4.3			**H**	Identify and map areas of High, Medium and Low archaeological potential	Resource implications include long-term funding and staffing	**2004**
5.1	Seek to increase enjoyment of the archaeology and history of St Albans for all who live, work in or visit the City		**H**	Enhance the archaeological resource for the benefit of residents and visitors through joint working with leisure and tourist initiatives		**Ongoing**
6.1	Improve access to and interpretation of Heritage Sites		**H**	Enhance the archaeological resource for the benefit of residents and visitors through joint working with leisure and tourist initiatives	Existing budgets	**Ongoing**
6.2			**M**	Improve access and presentation of the Clock Tower, Beech Bottom Dyke and London Gate. (Provision of reasonable access for all to heritage sites and buildings is a requirement of the 1995 Disabilities legislation). However Listed Building and Scheduled Ancient Monument regulations override them.		**2006/7**

	Issue		Priority	Action	Resource Implication	Timetable
6.3		**L**		Installation of interpretative panels/ displays/publications explaining individual heritage sites	In some cases Developer funding may be available through the precepts of PPG16 and 15, wherein the developer is encouraged to publish the results of archaeological works	
7.1	Make archaeological and historic archives more widely accessible	**M**		In partnership with Herts County Council develop schemes for making reports of archaeological work in the district accessible (through the ADHS and Oasis schemes in through the Herts Historic Environment Record f	There is a possibility of attracting grants from outside bodies	**2006**
7.2		**M**		Ensure that excavated material and archive reports are properly catalogued and referenced in order to be accessible to outside researchers and teachers	Resource implications include adequate long-term funding and staffing	**2004-5**
7.3		**M**		In partnership with Herts County Council develop archaeological databases for utilisation on the web as an educational and public information tool	Possibility of Heritage Lottery funding	**2005/6**
8.1	Promote the Historic Environment as an economic and tourist resource	**H**		Raise awareness among members, officers and stakeholders of the potential economic benefits of conserving and enhancing the Historic Environment	Resource implications include adequate long-term funding and staffing	**Ongoing**
8.2				Seek to attract grants from outside bodies for the conservation/restoration of historic monuments and listed buildings	Resource implications include adequate long-term funding and staffing	
8.3				Promote areas of particular educational and tourist potential in the form town trails, guided walks etc	Adequate long-term funding and staffing	**2006**

APPENDIX 1 SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS IN THE HISTORIC CORE OF ST ALBANS [AM].

Site Ref	Monument no.	Former English Heritage County no.	Fig. No	Location
AM4		HT32	2	Devils Ditch Gorhambury
AM5		HT41	2	Bacon's House, Old Gorhambury
AM6		HT1a	2	Verulamium, Bacon's Mount
AM7		HT1	2	Site of Verulamium, St Albans/St Michaels
AM7b		HT1b	2	Verulamium, The Fosse
AM7d		HT1d	2	Verulamium, part of wall and ditch of Roman City
AM8		HT1c	2	Verulamium, Prae Wood settlement
AM9	29449	HT23	2	Beech Bottom Entrenchment, Sandridge
AM10		HT36	2	The Clock Tower, St Albans
AM11		HT35	2	St Albans Abbey Gatehouse
AM12		HT96	2	St Albans Abbey, Site of Conventual Buildings
AM13	29470	HT38	2	Sopwell Nunnery, ruins of Sopwell House, St Albans
AM14	20620		2	Batch Wood moated site

APPENDIX 2 SITES FOR PRESERVATION IN THE HISTORIC CORE OF ST ALBANS [AS.L.P)

Site Ref	Fig. No	Location
A.S.L.P.5	2	Areas west and north-east of the scheduled area adjacent to Batch Wood moated site.
A.S.L.P.6	2	Three enclosures Gorhambury/Butlers Farm
AS.L.P 7	2	Roman Occupation Area, North of Verulamium, St Albans
AS.L.P 8	2	Belgic Occupation East of Prae Wood, St Albans/St Michaels
AS.L.P 11	2	Abbey Precinct, St Albans

APPENDIX 3 SITES IN THE HISTORIC CORE OF ST ALBANS WHICH MAY BE SUBJECT TO A RECORDING CONDITION [AS.R]

SITE REF.	Fig. No	Location
AS.R 23	2	Area around Verulamium
AS.R 24	2	Area around Beech Bottom
AS.R 25	2	St Albans, including Kingsbury, the Saxon and medieval town and Sopwell Nunnery
AS.R 38	2	Occupation site, The Wick, Sandpit Lane, St Albans